

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 DHA-02 ORM-02 H-02 IO-11 L-03

TRSE-00 OMB-01 SP-02 USIE-00 PRS-01 PA-01 SSO-00

NSCE-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

INRE-00 EURE-00 /074 W

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FM AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2933

C O N F I D E N T I A L NICOSIA 0203

STATE PASS AID

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR EAID CY US

SUBJECT: SENTATE SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT ON REFUGEE ASSISTANCE

REF: STATE 014061

1. EMBASSY OFFERS FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON PORTION OF SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT TRANSMITTED BY REFTEL WHICH MAY BE OF USE IN CASE OF PRESS INQUIRIES.

2. FACT THAT UNHCR OPERATIONS IN CYPRUS ARE "INCREASINGLY SUPPORTED BY SINGLE DONOR" IS TRUISM ADDING NOTHING TO ARGUMENT RE VALIDITY OF AID PROGRAM. CHARGE THAT UNHCR IS "CONVENIENT FRONT FOR CERTAIN AMERICAN INTERESTS" WITHOUT FURTHER IDENTIFYING THESE (BY IMPLICATION SINISTER) INTERESTS IS UNFOUNDED, MALICIOUS INSINUATION. MORE TO POINT IS FACT THAT BY FAR LARGEST PART OF US REFUGEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IS CASH RATHER THAN AID-IN-KIND. THIS ENTAILS OBVIOUS AND UNAVOIDABLE REQUIREMENT TO STAY WITHIN BOUNDS OF US LEGISLATION GOVERNING USE OF AID FUNDS.

3. STATEMENT REGARDING THREAT TO INDEPENDENCE OF UNHCR
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OPERATION IS MISREPRESENTATION. AUTHORS OF REPORT WERE

BRIEFED IN DETAIL ON HOW EMBASSY RELATES TO UNHCR STAFF HERE AND ON EXTREME CARE WE HAVE TAKEN TO ENSURE THAT UNHCR IS NOT ONLY AN ESSENTIAL VEHICLE BUT GENUINE PARTNER IN ALL INTERNATIONAL CYPRUS RELIEF ACTIVITIES (EXCEPT ICRC). UNHCR PHYSICALLY ADMINISTERS DONATIONS AND TAKES THE LEAD IN LIAISON WITH GOC.

4. HOUSING PROJECT REFERRED TO IN REPORT IS NOT RPT NOT "UNHCR HOUSING PROGRAM." IT IS 100 PERCENT GOC HOUSING PROGRAM, CONCEIVED AND IMPLEMENTED BY CYPRIOTS, AND WOULD BE PURSUED EVEN WITHOUT RPT WITHOUT ANY UNHCR CONTRIBUTION. AUTHORS OF REPORT APPARENTLY FAILED TO GRASP THIS SIGNIFICANT FACTOR.

5. FURTHER ON QUESTION OF HOUSING, EMBASSY DID NOT ALLOW ITSELF TO BE "DRAWN INTO HIGHLY DELICATE DEBATE", AS STATED IN REPORT. IN ACCORDANCE WITH CONGRESSIONAL INTENT, EMBASSY UNDERTOOK TO ENSURE THAT US FUNDS PROVIDED BY AID WOULD BE UTILIZED IN WELL PLANNED, FEASIBLE PROJECTS. TO THIS END, EMBASSY SOUGHT EXPERT ADVICE OF AID PROFESSIONAL ARCHITECT. UNHCR FULLY CONCURRED WITH THIS APPROACH -- INDEED, DEMANDED IT -- FOR REASON THAT UNHCR WAS BY NO MEANS PREPARED TO MAKE TECHNICAL DECISIONS OF VIABILITY OF HOUSING PROJECT. FINDINGS OF AID EXPERT'S REPORT WERE FULLY SUPPORTED BY COMPETENT PRIVATE CYPRIOT ARCHITECT TOWN PLANNER AND HAVE SINCE BEEN ACCEPTED AS VALID BY CONCERNED GOC OFFICIALS.

6. STATEMENT THAT EMBASSY USED "VETO" OVER GOC HOUSING PROJECT IS FALSE. EMBASSY ADVISED GOC OF SHORTCOMINGS OF INITIAL HOUSING PROJECT (ARADHIPPOU). EMBASSY INFORMED GOC THAT WHILE USG WAS NOT IN POSITION TO ASSIST FUNDING HOUSES DEEMED TO BE SUBSTANDARD, IT WAS QUITE PREPARED TO CONTRIBUTE APPROXIMATELY \$800,000 TO PROJECT'S SUPPORT INFRASTRUCTURE IN ORDER TO DEMONSTRATE USG'S WILLINGNESS TO BE OF ASSISTANCE IN TEMPORARY REFUGEE HOUSING. SIMULTANEOUSLY, EMBASSY PLEDGED APPROXIMATELY \$800,000 TO SUPPORT SECOND HOUSING PROJECT (AYIOS ATHANASSINOS). FUNDS ALREADY PROVIDED UNHCR AS CONTRIBUTION TO GOC HOUSING NOW TOTAL \$1.6 MILLION.
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7. GOC IS FULLY AWARE THAT USG PLANS TO MAKE FURTHER MAJOR CONTRIBUTION TO UNHCR FOR TEMPORARY HOUSING PROGRAM DURING CY-76. PRECISE AMOUNT REMAINS TO BE DETERMINED BUT IT WILL BE IN EXCESS OF \$5 MILLION. EMBASSY IS WORKING CLOSELY WITH UNHCR ON DETERMINING FINAL AMOUNT AND MODALITIES. GOC IS IN ACCORD WITH JOINT UNHCR-EMBASSY THINKING FOR THIS NEXT STAGE.

LATEST EXPRESSION OF SATISFACTION

WAS MADE TO AMBASSADOR JANUARY 20 BY MINLABOR SPANOS.

8. EMBASSY REJECTS CONTENTION THAT IT IS ATTACHING
UNWARRANTED CONDITIONS ON FUNDS TO UNHCR, EITHER FOR
"COTTAGE INDUSTRY" PROJECT OR FOR OTHER PROJECTS.
USG MAKES FUNDS AVAILABLE TO UNHCR ON SAME CONDITIONS
THAT SUCH FUNDS ARE USUALLY GRANTED TO OTHER INTER-
NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND IN COMPLIANCE WITH REQUIRE-
MENTS OF US LAWS.

9. EMBASSY DOES NOT PLAN TO MAKE ANY PUBLIC COMMENT ON
SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT. WE WOULD APPRECIATE BEING
ADVISED IF ANY STATEMENT IS MADE BY DEPARTMENT.
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Margaret P. Grafeld
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